



Economic Stabilization Task Force

Appointed by the City & Borough of Juneau's Mayor
Meeting Minutes from August 27, 2020

Call to Order

The Economic Stabilization Task Force meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Ms. Thomas.

Task Force Members Present: Max Mertz, Linda Thomas, Susan Bell, Theresa Belton, Bruce Botelho, Eric Forst, Lauren MacVay, Laura Martinson, and Terra Peters

Task Force Members Absent: Ken Koelsch

Staff Present: CBJ Finance Director, Jeff Rogers; City Manager, Rorie Watt; Administrative Assistant I, Jack Scholz

CBJ Assembly Members Present: None

Special Guest Speakers: Executive Director at Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC), Brian Holst

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Thomas informed the Task Force that, due to administrative errors that led to the agenda being posted after the deadline for public noticing requirements, they would not be able to take any formal actions or make motions at this meeting. Mr. Rogers said that they can still hold the meeting normally without taking any actions or making motions.

Since Mr. Holst would be attending the meeting later than previously thought, his report on the Business Stabilization Grants Phase 1-3 Progress would be delayed until he was able to attend.

Approval of Minutes

The motion to adopt the Economic Stabilization Task Force minutes from the August 13 meeting was deferred due to the Task Force's inability to make motions at this meeting.

UAS and Workforce Development

Mr. Mertz reported that the last time the Task Force met, they had already been talking with UAS about the potential for workforce development opportunities. Mr. Mertz stated that they are starting these discussions late; the fall semester has already begun, and it takes time to organize a scholarship program. Such a program would be structured to provide scholarships to attend UAS on a credit hour basis. The scholarships would be sufficient to cover costs, with a possible living stipend. He reported

interest in the possibility of running this scholarship program through a third party; there are several similar programs in Juneau. Due to the late starting date, they are unsure what kind of demand there is for a program this year. Another complicating factor is that any COVID-19 relief fund money used for the program must be spent by December 31, 2020. They are hoping for a potential extension from Congress. All of these factors contributed to the recommendation to hold off on creating a program for now, and to monitor Congress's decisions.

Task Force Term & Responsibilities

Ms. Thomas said that the end of the Task Force's six-month preliminary term is late September or early October. She suggested preparing a report to CBJ on actions taken by the Task Force and information gathered about the economic situation. Mr. Botelho suggested each member in charge of a fact-finding group prepare a brief report that they will then compile into a larger report to CBJ. Ms. Thomas stated that it is early to determine whether the Task Force will continue. If they do, it will likely be in a different capacity.

Public Comment Matrix

Ms. MacVay reported that there were no new public comments.

Grant Awards Round 1 – Alaska Community Foundation

Ms. Thomas reported that Ms. Skilbred was in the process of gathering information from the Alaska Community Foundation regarding awards for the first round of grants. This information will be used as a measure while requesting additional funding from CBJ. The Alaska Community Foundation had requested a second phase funding amount of \$3 million for non-profits specific to social service agencies and associated with public health and COVID-19 needs. This is on hold until they receive the information provided through the Alaska Community Foundation.

Childcare Update

Ms. Martinson reported that school started on the previous Monday, and that community members with children are attempting to solve the childcare issue on their own as best they can. A few daycare centers have reported losing employees hired by homeschooling families as at-home nannies.

Ms. Martinson warned of potential staffing issues at some daycare centers.

Mr. Watt informed the Task Force that the Assembly would be discussing childcare at a Committee of the Whole on August 31, 2020.

Update on Adopted Programs & Legislation in Progress

Jobs/Trails Program

Mr. Botelho reported that he received reports from CBJ and Eaglecrest, but that he had not heard back from Trail Mix, Inc. Reports from CBJ Parks and Recreation state the parks maintenance crews have been working on many trails clearing brush and mud slides, improving drainage and paths, and installing

concrete design footings, markers, and signs. They participated in multiple trainings in August. Maintenance crew teams have completed deep cleans in multiple downtown parks.

Mr. Botelho said that Mr. Dave Scanlan, the General Manager of Eaglecrest, reported that crews are working on many projects despite challenging weather. Mr. Scanlan had stated that they had several employees leave, potentially due to the difficulties of working in the weather. Eaglecrest has completed a mountain bike trail segment.

Rental Housing Assistance

Ms. MacVay reported that Tamara Rowcroft at Alaska Housing Development Corporation provided an update regarding CBJ's COVID-19 Short-Term Rental Assistance Program. Ms. Rowcroft had stated that they have only used a portion of the funds. There is concern about the amount of publicity for the program. Now that federal unemployment support has largely ended, they are expecting greater need for mortgage assistance. Additionally, the eviction moratorium has ended. This will likely increase demand as well.

Nonprofit Grants

Ms. Thomas stated that the Assembly, at its Monday meeting, approved a technical amendment to the nonprofit grant ordinance. This amendment asserted that applicants would not be excluded from receiving grant funding if they had received PPP or EIDL funds. If the demand for assistance becomes greater than the funds available, excluding applicants who have received PPP and EIDL funds might be included in the requirements for application. Ms. Thomas reported the applications were sent out on August 25, and are due back in late September. All applications will be considered at the same time.

Juneau ArtWorks Grant

Mr. Mertz announced that the Juneau ArtWorks Grant was introduced at the Finance Committee meeting on the previous Monday. It will be heard at next Assembly meeting.

Business Stabilization Grants Phase 1-3 Progress Report

Mr. Holst reported that the Juneau Economic Development Council had great outreach for Phases 2 & 3 of the Business Stabilization Grants. The window to submit applications for Phases 2 & 3 closes on August 31, after having been open for three week time per the ordinance. Mr. Holst stated that they have currently received 194 applications for Phase 2 and 35 for Phase 3. As the deadline is approaching, they are seeing an increase in applications. The number of applications is still not as high as expected; JEDC recieved 240 applications in Phase 1, and they assumed that all previous applicants would apply for Phase 2, as well as others. So far they have received 47 applications from new applicants, potentially due to additional outreach. One possible consequence of this is the need to prorate the funds awarded if the demand exceeds the resources. If it does not, JEDC will have the option to open for additional applicants. Mr. Rogers had the idea of sending out a mailer to every sale tax payer in Juneau, which has garnered some new applicants.

Mr. Holst said that there are 185 applications that are post-approval, with less than 60 applications that have not yet been completed. There is some overlap between the end of Phase 1 and start of Phases 2 & 3, which has caused some minor confusion. They have sent out clarifications.

Mr. Forst asked what was holding up the process for those who have not yet completed their applications.

Mr. Holst replied that some people do not work well with computers and have trouble getting information to the JEDC. These applicants require some extra work and coaching.

Mr. Mertz remarked that they are four days away from the expiration of Phases 2 & 3 on August 31. Section K of the business grant ordinance allows the City Manager to continue the program on a first come, first served basis if the grant program is not fully subscribed by the expiration date. The Task Force needs to know if the City Manager is going to extend it, or whether they need to recommend that he consider doing so.

Mr. Holst said that they will not know until midnight on August 31 how many applications they have received. They will continue to process applications for award amounts, and then assess whether there are resources left over. He stated that there may be a pause between closing down the application process and reopening it, if CBJ decides to do so. It will take about a week to calculate whether they can reopen it.

Ms. Thomas asked if JEDC is managing the Alaska CARES money along with Credit Union 1.

Mr. Holst replied that they are, and said it was his understanding that they are the only non-government agency doing grant processing. In the contractual agreement, they asked for applications from southeast Alaska first, which will be prioritized. They started awarding grants under the Alaska CARES program on August 26. The US Department of Commerce is encouraging businesses that have received PPP and EIDL funds to apply.

Mr. Mertz asked why only the JEDC is working on grant administration.

Ms. MacVay replied that they engaged in discussions with five or six other financial institutions, but in the end only JEDC submitted a response to the Request for Proposals. She added that the grant administration program is inspired by JEDC's other programs. She credited JEDC with much of the progress made in administering the program.

Good of the Order

Ms. Belton reported that the Backpack Program was not as well-utilized as they thought it would be. She also stated that CBJ received a \$150 thousand grant from the Department of Commerce, which was reported on by KTOO, KINY, and a news release from the Department of Commerce itself.

Adjournment

At 3:55 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Appointed Task Force Members

Max Mertz, Co-Chair • Linda Thomas, Co-Chair • Susan Bell • Theresa Belton • Bruce Botelho

Eric Forst • Ken Koelsch • Lauren MacVay • Laura Martinson • Terra Peters